

## THE MEANING OF TRADITIONAL TASAPO TREATMENT IN THE COMMUNITY OF NAGARI AIE TAJUN LUBUK ALUNG DISTRICT, WEST SUMATERA

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### ABSTRACT

This study discusses the meaning of traditional tasapo medicine in the community in Nagari Aie Tajun, Lubuk Alung District, Padang Pariaman Regency. The purpose of this study is to describe the ritual procession and meaning of tasapo treatment in the community in Nagari Aie Tajun. The study method used is qualitative using symbolic interpretive theory by Clifford Geertz. Data collection techniques are field studies in the form of observations, interviews and documentation. Data analysis techniques include data collection, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. The findings from this study are that the process of tasapo treatment begins with providing tools and materials. Turmeric is the main ingredient for finding out whether someone has Tasapo or not by measuring it by a Tasapo healer. Then the turmeric is given a spell and then dropped down. Turmeric lying face down is considered a disease and then thrown away, while turmeric lying on its back is considered medicine and is rubbed on the joints. The general meaning of tasapo is to expel supernatural creatures that disturb humans. The symbolic meaning in the completeness of the requirements, such as turmeric, symbolizes the interaction between the village healer or shaman and the supernatural creature that causes tasapo. Prayer mats symbolize cleanliness. Rice is symbolized as a supporter in tasapo treatment to speed up healing. Jatropha leaves symbolize that when they are used, the disease will move to the leaves.

**Keywords:** Tradisional Medicine, Tasapo, Tatagua

### 1. Introduction

One of the cultures practiced by the community and which has become a habit and has been passed down from generation to generation, one of which is

traditional medicine. Traditional medicine according to Widia Sholma (2021: 137) is defined as a local healing practice found in a community. Traditional medicine can be

said to be a culture because traditional medicine has become a habit and has been handed down from generations to generations. Tasapo traditional medicine is carried out by the people of Nagari Aie Tajun.

Tasapo is a disease caused by interference from supernatural beings or supernatural beings by greeting or reprimanding someone in places where supernatural beings are believed to exist, such as cemeteries, rivers, jungles and so on. Tasapo can be cured with traditional medicine carried out by certain people. People who can do this and have this ability are like village shamans. So, people who treat tasapo are not just anyone, but have inherited it from previous people before them. They are usually called amak, anduang or uwo for women and ungku or inyak for men.

A shaman according to Qodratillah (2011: 104) is a person who heals, gives spells in the form of spells and witchcraft. In this research, the term shaman is defined as a person who tries and is able to cure someone of their illness through traditional medicine that has been passed down from generation to generation. People believe that tasapo disease can be cured by making ta-tagua-an. Tatagua is the term used for the medicinal herbs used in tasapo healing. This medicinal concoction uses several ingredients that are provided by nature. The natural ingredients used include turmeric, white rice and castor oil leaves. Meanwhile, the tools needed include prayer mats, glasses, plates or containers, and knives.

Traditional medicine has developed in line with the times and the culture that is increasingly developing in society is part of local wisdom that is difficult to eradicate. This research is interesting to study further because in the modern era

and increasingly advanced medical systems such as the development of the medical world, people still place their trust in traditional Tasapo medicine. However, the people themselves do not know the symbolic meaning contained in this treatment. People prefer something that is cheap, easy and fast to solve health problems without paying attention to the process of practicing treatment step by step. So, this research was conducted to examine the meaning of traditional medicine in treating tasapo. Also to examine the ritual procession in Tasapo healing practices.

The theoretical benefit of this research is that it is hoped that it will be useful for contributing to thinking and developing knowledge, especially regarding traditional medicine which has become local wisdom for the community and is expected to provide data and information regarding the rituals and meaning of traditional Tasapo medicine, so that researchers who study this matter can used as a reference in understanding traditional Tasapo medicine. Furthermore, the practical benefits of this research are: Practically, this research is expected to provide benefits for researchers, readers and the public in knowing the rituals and symbolic meanings in the completeness of the requirements for traditional Tasapo medicine in Nagari Aie Tajun, Lubuk Alung District, Padang Pariaman Regency.

## **2. Literature Review**

The literature review is used as a direct or indirect reference to the study to be researched. Literature review which is used as a reference source from previous research with the same object or almost the same object in the sense that it is

similar to the researcher. The literature review used as the first reference material is a thesis written by A. Barkam Yuslando (2022) with the title Medical Medicine in Supernatural Studies in the Banjar Tribe in Sungai Ampat Village, Gaung Anak Serka District, Indagiri Hilir Regency. The aim of this research is to find out how medical treatment works in supernatural studies and to understand the process of treatment. This research explains that epilepsy is caused by a warning from a spirit that causes shock in the body of a person affected by kepidaraan. The treatment requirements are to use needles, thread, turmeric, rice, betel, lime, water, nyru, and a predetermined time.

The second research that is used as a reference in this research is a thesis written by Adi Saputra (2021) regarding the Kunai Philosophy of the Traditional Treatment Model of the Enggano Island Community, North Bengkulu Regency. The research aims to find out how people process and understand kunai treatment. In this research, kunai or what can also be called kesambet in Indonesian is a solution for people who suffer from illnesses caused by supernatural beings because humans have disturbed them. This disorder takes the form of physical disturbances and disturbances during sleep which can be caused by entering graves without greetings or bathing in rivers at sunset. Physical disorders such as pain in parts of the body, likes to pass gas when ablution, likes to get angry, lazy to do activities. Meanwhile, sleep disturbances include overlapping.

The previous research described above has several similarities with this research, namely regarding traditional medicine with different locations and names or terms. Apart from that, there

are differences such as the meaning and purpose, method of implementation, tools and materials used and the consequences resulting from traditional healing practices.

### 3. Research Method

The research method used is a qualitative method because this data is obtained in the field to obtain as much data as possible which will later be presented as obtained through observation, description and interpretation of the object of this research. Data collection techniques in this research were carried out using several techniques, namely field studies with observations, interviews and documentation. The data analysis technique in this research is data collection, then the data that has been collected will be reduced and displayed, and finally conclusions will be drawn.

### 4. Result and Discussion

#### A. *Tasapo* dan *Tasapo Treatment*

##### 1. *Tasapo*

According to the people of Nagari Aie Tajun, *Tasapo* is a term used when someone is greeted by a supernatural being. A person who is accosted by this supernatural creature is called *tasapo*. The supernatural creature that greets you could be the spirit of an ancestor or a relative who has preceded you. This goes back to the beliefs and beliefs of society or the individual themselves.

*Tasapo* has no average age, which means it can attack all ages. The characteristics or symptoms of people affected by *tasapo* will experience dizziness, body chills and sometimes accompanied by excessive sweating. To treat *tasapo* disease, you can make

tatagua. Tatagua is a term or designation used to treat tasapo.

Tasapo can occur when someone is accosted by a supernatural being. This happens because of mistakes made by humans themselves, whether mistakes made intentionally or unintentionally, so that humans are disturbed by supernatural beings. Places where supernatural creatures are believed to exist include cemeteries, rivers, mountains, forests, jungles and so on.

## **2. Tasapo Treatment**

Based on research conducted by M. Yunis (2017), tasapo is one of the names of traditional diseases in Padang Pariaman Regency. Tasapo disease can only be treated with traditional medicine, namely treatment methods used by society since ancient times which have been passed down and developed gradually from generation to generation. Traditional treatment is also carried out in Indonesia. This can be seen from various regions which have a variety of traditional treatments which are still maintained and preserved to this day (Nur Fitriani, 2020: 28).

Meanwhile, WHO in Nina Aini Nurulsiah (2016: 5) defines traditional medicine as the total sum of knowledge, skills and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences of people who have different cultural customs, whether explained or not, used in health maintenance as well as in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illnesses.

According to the Decree of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia No. 1076/MENKES/SK/VII/2003 concerning the Implementation of Traditional Medicine, traditional medicine is treatment and/or education/training,

and is applied in accordance with the norms applicable in society. Traditional medicine carried out by the community can take the form of using concoctions from natural plants.

## **B. Tasapo Traditional Medicine Procession**

### **1. Preparation Stage**

The preparation stage is something that is done before starting a certain activity. The preparation stage in the Tasapo treatment procession is the initial stage so that the treatment process in treating Tasapo can be carried out. The preparatory stage that must be prepared is by preparing several tools and materials, namely: (1) knife; namely one fruit of an unspecified type as long as it can be used to cut turmeric. The knife is usually prepared by the healer. However, if a knife is brought by the person seeking treatment, the healer will use the knife brought, (2) prayer mat; Usually it is provided by the doctor and you can bring it yourself. One prayer mat is used, the type of prayer mat is not specified and the color is not specified as long as it is clean, (3) the container; brought by the patient because later this container will be taken home. If you forget, the doctor usually lends you his container. One container used of unspecified type and color, (4) glass; brought by the person who is going for treatment or may use the doctor's glass. The glass used is only one glass with an unspecified color and shape, (5) Water; namely ordinary water or clean water because it will be drunk later, (6) Rice; namely the type of white rice provided by the healer or you can bring a handful yourself, (7) Turmeric; based on the color, the turmeric used is the type of yellow or red turmeric brought by the sufferer or may be given by the healer if he forgets to

bring it, (8) Jatropha Leaves; The parts used are seven leaves which will later be soaked in water and a pinch of white rice. Jatropha leaves can be obtained from healers who usually have jatropha trees in their yard or next to their house.

## **2. Implementation Stage**

The tasapo treatment procession is carried out if a person feels he is tasapo. After that, the person affected by tasapo will go to the house of a shaman or smart person or can be called a village shaman because he treats an illness traditionally. In this case, researchers saw directly the tasapo treatment procession. At that time, researchers and one of the parents whose 11 year old son, Hamdan, was infected with tasapo. His parents took their child to the house of a Tasapo healer, Amak Pasah. When they arrived at the doctor's house, Hamdan's parents conveyed their aims and objectives, namely that they wanted to ask to make tatagua because their child was sick after playing kites. The parents said that their child had a fever with a high body temperature and had been taken to the midwife, but had not recovered after two days. Therefore, his parents took their child to a Tasapo healer.

After that, the doctor will ask whether the sufferer or the sufferer's family brought their own tools and materials or not. At that time, Hamdan's parents did not bring tools and materials, so the doctor would provide the tools and materials he needed. Once the tools and materials are sufficient, the tasapo treatment procession will be carried out.

The procession first begins with turmeric as an intermediary to find out whether the person is tasapo or not. The turmeric is halved into two parts. Then, the mantra is recited which begins with

reciting Bismillahirrahmanirrahim and then continues with the recitation of the mantra with Minang language pronunciation and accompanied by mentioning the names of Allah SWT and Rasulullah SAW. Then, the turmeric will be balanced (a Minangkabau language term that has no equivalent in Indonesian) that is, the position of the two halved turmeric is placed face down on the back of the hand. After that, the mantra is recited for the treatment of tasapo, then the turmeric is dropped by turning the palm of the hand.

After the turmeric is balanced, any turmeric that falls face down will be thrown away because it is considered a disease. Meanwhile, turmeric that falls on its back is taken as medicine. Turmeric is used as a tasapo medicine by rubbing the turmeric on joints such as the head, neck, chest, hands, stomach and feet. Turmeric is rubbed into the joints because joints are considered to be the site of disease. So by rubbing turmeric, which is interpreted as an antidote or repellent of supernatural beings, it is hoped that it will be able to cure the pain experienced.

Hamdan, who was taken by his parents to a tasapo doctor, after two trials, found that he was indeed affected by tasapo because turmeric was lying on his back and partly face down. Turmeric lying on its back is used as medicine by rubbing it. After that, the turmeric is thrown and thrown away. Apart from using the method above, turmeric that has been rubbed into the joints may also not be thrown away. Turmeric can be used as medicine by using one of the turmeric that has been balanced by putting the turmeric in a glass of water. In the glass also add a pinch of rice. After that, drink the water mixed with turmeric and rice. However, Hamdan's parents chose to



throw away the turmeric that had been rubbed in the hope that their son's illness would recover quickly.

Apart from that, healers also provide traditional medicine using natural plants, namely castor leaves, if the sufferer has a hot body temperature and can speed up healing, such as what Hamdan suffered, who had symptoms of fever with a high body temperature. *Jatropha* leaves will be soaked in a container filled with water. Enough clean water and a pinch of white rice. This concoction functions as a fever reducer. Therefore, it should be used throughout the body. Apart from that, you can also drink the water in this concoction to speed up the reduction of body heat from within the body.

### **3. Closing Stage**

The next stage, namely the closing stage, is a concoction of *jatropha* leaves soaked in water with a pinch of rice in a container brought home by Hamdan's parents. Then Amak Pasah, the Tasapo healer, advised that the concoction of *jatropha* leaves be used three times a day for three consecutive days. After that, parents and tasapo sufferers are allowed to go home. Before going home, the parents of Hamdan who was affected by tasapo did not forget to give a little money as a thank you to the healer.

The *jatropha* leaf concoction that is brought home is used by rubbing it on parts of the body such as the head, torso, hands and feet. After using *jatropha* leaves, usually the rubbed leaves will cause spots on the leaves. This is caused by the heat of the body, causing the *jatropha* leaves used to leave scars and even wilt and turn yellow.

### **C. Symbolic Meaning in Traditional Tasapo Medicine**

#### **1. Meaning in Completeness of Tasapo Treatment Requirements**

In general, tasapo treatment has the meaning of exorcising supernatural creatures that disturb or approach humans. The treatment process has a meaning or purpose stored in it and also has symbolic meaning, namely as follows:

##### **a) Turmeric**

According to Amak Pasah (Interview 14 November 2023), who is a tasapo healer, turmeric is the main requirement needed to treat tasapo. Turmeric plays an important role in the treatment process. If turmeric is not present, then treatment cannot be carried out. People trust turmeric as an intermediary to find out whether a person has actually been infected with tasapo or not.

So, in other words, turmeric symbolizes the interaction between the healer and supernatural beings which causes a person to experience tasapo. Turmeric will be placed on the back of the hand and then cast a spell after it is balanced. According to Amak Pasah (a tasapo healer), the turmeric doesn't have to be balanced, it can even be thrown. The turmeric is balanced because it follows the teachings of its ancestors.

After the turmeric was balanced, the result was that some of the turmeric was lying face down and some of the turmeric was lying on its back, indicating that the person was indeed affected by tasapo. Turmeric lying face down is considered a disease, therefore it must be thrown away. So, the saffron lying face down symbolizes disease, and by throwing away the saffron, the disease is also thrown away. Meanwhile, part of the turmeric that lies on its back after being balanced is

believed to be a medicine to treat tasapo. Turmeric is used by applying it to the joints. According to Amak Pasah (Interview 14 November 2023), turmeric is applied to the joints because the area is considered to be the site of disease. Therefore, turmeric is rubbed into the joints by forming a cross. This symbolizes that no supernatural beings will approach or disturb you again. After rubbing it into the joints. The turmeric is thrown away while saying the words of prayer hoping for healing.

b) Prayer Mat

The balanced turmeric is then dropped on a prayer mat as a base. According to Amak Pasah (Interview 14 November 2023), turmeric dropped on the prayer mat symbolizes cleanliness and so that the treatment process goes well. However, turmeric may be dropped on anything other than prayer mats such as cardboard, etc. as long as it is clean.

c) Rice

Apart from turmeric as an external medicine, it is also used as an internal medicine by soaking the turmeric in clean water and adding a pinch of rice. After that, the medicinal concoction is drunk by reciting the Prophet's prayers (Interview with Amak Pasah, 14 November 2023).

A concoction of water mixed with rice is symbolized as a supporter in tasapo treatment to speed up healing. Considered a supporter because this is optional, you may or may not do it.

d) Castor Leaves

Jatropha leaves are used by soaking seven castor leaves in clean water and then adding a pinch of rice. Generally in tasapo treatment seven strands are used. According to Amak Pasah and Tina,

children of Amak Pasah (Interview with Amak Pasah, 14 November 2023), jatropha leaves can be used with seven leaves, five leaves, or 3 leaves as long as the number is odd because God likes odd numbers.

The use of castor leaf concoction is rubbed onto the head, stomach, back and legs or better still the whole body. This concoction functions to reduce hot body temperature, so that after use, castor oil leaves will leave scars on the leaves such as spots, the leaves will wilt and turn yellow due to the hot body temperature. Jatropha leaves symbolize that when they are used, the disease will move to the leaves. So, the disease suffered will be cured.

## 2. Pandangan Masyarakat terhadap Pengobatan Tradisional *Tasapo*

The community's views or perspectives regarding traditional Tasapo medicine are as follows:

a) Opinion from the Village Healer/Shaman

Tasapo can only be cured by making tatagua because tasapo is a disease caused by interference from supernatural, mystical creatures. Healers believe that with tatagua, tasapo can be cured through spells and prayers as well as existing requirements. However, it comes back to each individual's beliefs. Those who have the belief that they can be cured when seeking treatment, then with this belief the illness suffered can be cured.

Magic which is believed to have supernatural powers has long been known by the public. The village shaman said that this treatment had been used for a long time, as well as the herbs used which were ancient. The conditions used in making the potion are ancient recipes that have existed in ancient times.

b) Opinions from Religious Figures

Tasapo treatment does not escape religious attention. One of them is an ustadz who is also capable of carrying out tasapo treatment. Interview with Ustadz Tk. Sutan, December 25 2023, explained that Tasapo is not contrary to Islam, because jinn and demons are expelled or driven away by angels to the islands and hills described in the book of tafsir jalalain.

Not only relying on mantras, treating tasapo also uses the power of religion. Religion is the ultimate need for human life in this world. In other words, humans need religion as a guide or goal to achieve prosperity in their lives. Humans live their lives in their own way that they believe in (Faizal Ansori, 2020: 50). In realizing happiness and prosperity there are differences and that is one of the things that worries humans. For example, when dealing with health, they choose magical shortcuts.

c) Opinions from the sufferer or the sufferer's family

Traditional medicine is sometimes only used as an alternative for people, as was the opinion of one of the people who had undergone tasapo treatment. Andeh Upik (Interview 24 December 2023), believes that people carry out traditional tasapo treatment because they find it suitable and feel that traditional medicine can heal faster than medical treatment. This was also agreed with by Anduang Baih (Interview with Anduang Baih, 24 December 2023), who was of the opinion that he was old and relied on traditional medicine recommended by people around him to recover quickly without spending a lot of money.

By summarizing these findings, it can be seen that treating tasapo must be done with traditional medicine, namely by

making tatagua. The community carries out the Tasapo treatment ritual procession not solely to treat Tasapo. But it is also done to reduce their expenses. Thus, not many people know the meaning of tasapo treatment. This research uses the symbolic interpretive theory by Clifford Geertz as a framework for thinking in answering the problem formulation because symbolic interpretive is an approach used to understand human behavior and then interpret the meaning of the resulting symbols. This indirectly contributes and answers the problem formulation in this research.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the research results from the title of this thesis, namely traditional tasapo treatment in the community in Nagari Aie Tajun, Lubuk Alung District, Padang Pariaman Regency, the researcher draws the conclusion that the first tasapo treatment procession begins with providing tools and materials as treatment requirements and so that the treatment procession is carried out. The tools include: (1) knife; used to cut turmeric, (2) prayer mat; used as a base when turmeric is balanced, (3) container; used for placing potions, (4) glasses; used to place potions. The ingredients in the tasapo treatment are turmeric, castor oil leaves, white rice and water. Turmeric is the main ingredient in medicine as a medium for finding out whether someone has tasapo or not. The turmeric will be balanced three times or more. If one turmeric is in a prone position and the other is in a supine position then the person is considered tasapo. Then the turmeric lying on your back is rubbed into the joints because turmeric is considered a medicine.



In general, tasapo treatment is interpreted as something to expel supernatural creatures that disturb humans. Tasapo treatment in the community's view is as follows: (1) According to the view of the village healer or shaman, tasapo treatment is a treatment that can be cured through spells and prayers and there are requirements in the form of tools and materials used. Tasapo can only be cured with alternative medicine or traditional medicine called tatagua. In tasapo treatment, if the sufferer has confidence that he can be cured then the treatment will go well. (2) According to religious figures, tasapo is a disease caused by the devil. Religious figures are of the view that tasapo is not against Islam because Allah SWT created all diseases and Allah SWT will also cure them. (3) According to the view of the sufferer or the sufferer's family, traditional medicine is used as an alternative if medical treatment cannot cure the illness suffered. Apart from that, in order not to incur large costs, people prefer traditional medicine to save money.

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